

Buckley Family

## Tracing family tree yields fruit of new friendship

By LIZ CARVER  
Times Staff Writer

Witnessing grandchildren grow up and relatives die — taking with them secrets of the family heritage — was enough for Jack Buckley to decide it was time to trace the events and people that brought the Buckley family to America.

Buckley, a Sullivan resident and retired U.S. Post Office employee, first operated on a whim to trace his family tree. But Buckley believes the caprice-turned-serious venture helped him trace several branches of his family tree 81 generations through England and France.

The quest began about eight years ago when Buckley got caught up in the excitement of others tracing their families. He soon enrolled in a genealogy course taught by Terre Haute genealogist Dorothy Clark.

"I learned from Dorothy to quit doing what I was doing," Buckley said, referring to his attempt to trace each family member's full family tree, casting out on branch upon branch of the family structure. "You get bogged down that way though," he said.

So he followed Clark's suggestion that he trace one family line — father after father, for instance — until that name produced no more leads. Then Clark suggested tracing a brother or other relative from that point.

"I knew my great-grandfather was born in Oldham, England," he said. That knowledge came from information he received from a cousin in Terre Haute, who sent Buckley a family bible. Inside the bible was the key that helped unlock Buckley's family history.

When Buckley opened the bible, he found a handwritten message on yellowed and time-worn paper, dated Nov. 1, 1897. The letter was written to his great-grandfather, Paul Buckley, an immigrant who settled in Shelburn at age 19. The letter contained sad news from his brother, Buckley Buckley (Jack Buckley's great-great uncle) concerning the death of another brother, Joe.

Jack Buckley ascertained from the letter that great-grandfather Paul had come to America leaving behind his three brothers, one of

which was buried in Oldham's Chadderton Cemetery.

With that information, amateur historian Buckley struck on an idea. He wrote for a copy of the Oldham, England telephone directory. And when he received it, he counted slightly fewer than 500 Buckley's living in and around Oldham. His next initiative was to send out copies of a query to 100 Bucleys listed in the directory.

Buckley received replies, but none that led to any clues about his heritage in England. So he sent a second batch, then a third batch of letters — also to the local newspaper, the Oldham Chronicle, which published his intent to find relatives.

After the third batch, he hooked on a winner.

The winner was Colin Wood, an Oldham resident who also had family ties to the Bucleys. When Wood caught wind of Jack's search for his English heritage, Wood visited cemeteries, looked up church records and documented information for Buckley, helping him trace the family line back about three more generations.

The Sullivan County Bucleys and the Woods have since become close friends with a common goal to investigate their family lineage. They still have not found a clue that links their own blood. The common name and goal is all they share so far, besides their obvious friendship.

Jack Buckley and his wife, Ilena, have visited England, and the Woods have come here to Sullivan. But Jack is not satisfied with ending the search for more family members there.

And this account of Buckley's search and documentation is by no means complete. At Buckley's home, he has an endless supply of charts, old pictures, books, magazines, letters, and newspapers which all document his English family heritage. On one chart he has documented, with the help of history books, his family lines which go back several hundred years to the monarchy in France.

The 81 generations he believes he can truthfully document may seem hard to believe, he concurs. But just like the books that purportedly document that President George Washington chopped down a cherry tree, books are not infallible. He just hopes with the eight years he has put into it, some of it is at least semiaccurate.

Special Collections



BUCKLEY BUCKLEY  
SULLIVAN BUCKLEY  
ALL LIVES OF THE BUCKLEY BUCKLEY

Dear Mr. Buckley  
I am very  
pained to hear of the death of brother  
John which took place  
on October 25th after  
having been confined to bed  
for just a week.  
And as I am at the same time  
convinced you will be  
his 100th year  
I am sure of the truth of  
his blessing and the love  
which I feel for him.

as you do in America.  
May I have an R. of you  
you can think of paying  
a visit to us here in the  
Old Country. I can  
assure you it would be  
a source of great  
pleasure to see you  
after a lapse of say  
over 40 years, and  
I think if you could  
but spare the time  
you would find such



Photos By LIZ CARVER

Above, Jack Buckley scans a chart filled with the Buckley names of ancestors living and dead, here and abroad, which make up his family tree. Pictured at left, this letter was sent in 1897 from England, written by one Buckley brother to another about the death of yet another brother. The letter was found in an old family bible and given to Jack Buckley, Sullivan, who used the information to trace his family back to Oldham, England.